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Literature and Culture
Workshop I: Summary of Discussion

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Workshop I was held on the morning of July 27th in the conference room on the second floor of the Main Administration Building. The presenter, Professor Uzawa from Keio University, presented her paper entitled "Hashimura Togo Went to War: Yellowface, the Yellow Peril, and Philosophy of 'Poppaganda'." According to Professor Uzawa, the superficially naive and yet witty pseudo-Japanese persona, Hashimura Togo, was created by Wallace Irwin in 1907. Irwin had begun writing a column for the serialization of his "Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy" in the weekly magazine, *Collier's*. Irwin published four Togo novels, and in 1917 Paramount Pictures made a silent film called "Hashimura Togo". Professor Uzawa expounded how Irwin's Togo became racially "oxymoronic" in the light of the changes in the ways Americans perceived Japan after the Russo-Japanese War. As one of the oxymoronic personas, she described the portrait of Togo in which Irwin disguised himself. Entitled "The Yellow Peril" the portrait suggests Togo's ambiguous racial identity served to stimulate the readers' reexamination of their own identities. Professor Uzawa contended that Togo's "Japanned" English becomes a discourse of social critique. Togo's innocent and fractured way of speech recasts him a literary wise-fool. Because the presenter's allotted time was limited, Professor Uzawa was only able to present the first half of her paper. Professor Uzawa requested that the participants read the rest of her paper in the presentation handouts.

After Professor Uzawa's presentation, Professor Roma-Sianturi delivered her commentary. Professor Roma-Sianturi indicated that the cultural and historical significance of Irwin's Hashimura Togo can be understood in the wider perspective of U. S. colonialism over the Asian Pacific in the 1910's and 1920's. In order to show how the Filipinos were portrayed as "the wards of the U. S." in the cartoons, Professor Roma-Sianturi showed us some fascinating newspaper cartoons which appeared in the early 1900's during the American occupation of the Philippines. These included "The White Man's Burden," "What To Do With the Philippines," and "The Senate Philippine Bill Offers Great Inducements to the Bad Filipinos." The last one is particularly interesting in that the Filipinos were portrayed as either the "good" Filipinos or "bad" Filipinos according to the extent to which they cooperated with the U. S. "civilizing" mission. Furthermore Professor Roma-Sianturi mentioned that there were boy servants called

"muchachos" who played an essential role in the domestic sphere of their white mistresses. Professor Roma-Sianturi argued that racial stereotypes serve to perpetuate an image of the Asian "Other", which was considered to pose a threat to the U. S. security.

After the comments from Professor Roma-Sianturi, Professor Uzawa touched upon Togo's multiple transformations in the cartoons by other illustrators through World War I to World War II. These are examined in Chapters Three and Four of her paper. The cartoons exemplify the changing sentiments Americans felt towards Japan and the Japanese, which were visually crucial for them to distinguish themselves from "others", aliens and enemies during wartime. The various versions of Togo Professor Uzawa showed us on her power-point presentation provided us with striking images of changes in his appearance. Some of the fascinating cartoons she showed us were "Cute Little Togo" (Henry Raleigh, *Good Housekeeping*, 1912), Togo and his cousin in "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" (Louis Rogers, *Sunset*, 1920), amiable Togo in "A Gentle-Looking Citizen" (Tony Sarg, *Herald Tribune*, 1934), and finally "Hashimura Frankenstein" (Theodor Seuss Geisel, *PM*, 1942). Professor Uzawa's presentation was insightful in alerting us to the intricate relationship between visual representation and ethnicity.

After Professor Uzawa's presentation the audience was invited to join the discussion. Professor Chow expressed her appreciation of the topics that Professor Uzawa and Professor Roma-Sinaturi raised, and she commented on the growing critical interests in visual representations relating to the Yellow Peril, and on the difficulty in critically interpreting the stereotypes of racial "others." Professor Chow indicated her gratitude to Professor Uzawa and Professor Roma-Sianturi for enabling us to develop a critical insight into these issues.

Question and Answer Session

The following is a subjective summary of the questions and comments made by the participants. In response to the question as to why Wallace Irwin was interested in a Japanese schoolboy, Professor Uzawa argued that Irwin might have identified with Japanese students in financial straits like Togo, since he was also a self-supporting student who worked as a waiter at the school dining hall. Another question concerned the literary effectiveness of Togo's "fractured English" on the readers; Professor Uzawa admitted that Togo's "fractured English" reveals some insinuations of racism, and she maintained that the "fractured English" spoken by all the characters from Togo's first person narrator creates an egalitarian world without prejudice against one's use of the language. A further question related to why the Asian stereotype was mostly derived from the Chinese; Professor Uzawa contended that Mark Twain's fictitious Chinese narrator, Ah Song Hi and his character, Ah Sin, in his play *Ah Sin*, which was co-authored with Bret Harte, facilitated the promulgation of the Asian stereotype as that of the Chinese. Twain's words of appreciation of Irwin's Togo served to heighten the readers'

interest in the pseudo-Japanese Togo.

The discussion ranged over many interesting topics relating to the relationships between visual representations and ethnicity. The presentation of Professor Uzawa, the comments of Professor Roma-Sianturi and Professor Chow, and the participants' discussion ensured a lively debate and enabled us to consider these issues from a new perspective.